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A RIEMANN SOLVER BASED ON A GLOBAL EXISTENCE PROOF  
FOR THE RIEMANN PROBLEM

Pravir Dutt

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INSTITUTE FOR COMPUTER APPLICATIONS IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING  
NASA Langley Research Center, Hampton, Virginia 23665

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Pravir Dutt

Institute for Computer Applications in Science and Engineering

ABSTRACT

Godunov's method and several other methods for computing solutions to the equations of gas dynamics use Riemann solvers to resolve discontinuities at the interface between cells. A new method is proposed here for solving the Riemann problem based on a global existence proof for the solution to the Riemann problem. The method is found to be very reliable and computationally efficient.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of a finite-difference scheme based on Riemann solvers by Godunov permitted the development of robust numerical methods for problems involving strong shocks. He proposed to consider all quantities in a computational cell as given by cell averages and to resolve the resulting discontinuities at the cell edges by the solution to a Riemann problem. The method has the important advantage that it automatically handles strong shocks and interactions and is able to predict cavitation should it occur.

The use of Godunov's method has attracted particular interest in the field of aerodynamics. Here one expects to encounter only ideal gas (polytropic) equations of state. A Riemann solver for the equations of gas dynamics was first proposed by Godunov. It was subsequently modified and improved by Chorin [2].

In this paper we take advantage of a global existence proof for the Riemann problem to propose an altogether different method for solving the Riemann problem. This method has the advantage that it is computationally very efficient and is guaranteed to converge to the solution of the Riemann problem.

## 2. THE RIEMANN PROBLEM IN GAS DYNAMICS

The gas dynamics equations in Eulerian coordinates are

$$\rho_t + (\rho u)_x = 0$$

$$(\rho u)_t + (\rho u^2 + p)_x = 0$$

$$e_t + ((e + p)u)_x = 0$$

where  $\rho$  is the density of the gas,  $u$  is the velocity,  $\rho u$  is the momentum,  $e$  is the energy per unit volume, and  $p$  is the pressure.

We assume that the gas is ideal and polytropic so that the equation of state is given by

$$p = \rho RT$$

where  $p$  is the pressure,  $\rho$  the density,  $T$  the temperature, and  $R$  the universal gas constant. Further, we assume that  $\gamma > 1$ , where  $\gamma$  is the ratio of specific heats.

We seek a solution to the gas dynamics equations with initial data

$$\begin{bmatrix} \rho \\ u \\ p \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \rho_L \\ u_L \\ p_L \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{for } x < 0$$

and

$$\begin{bmatrix} \rho \\ u \\ p \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \rho_R \\ u_R \\ p_R \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{for } x > 0.$$

The solution to the Riemann problem is illustrated in Figure 1 on a  $x - t$  graph.

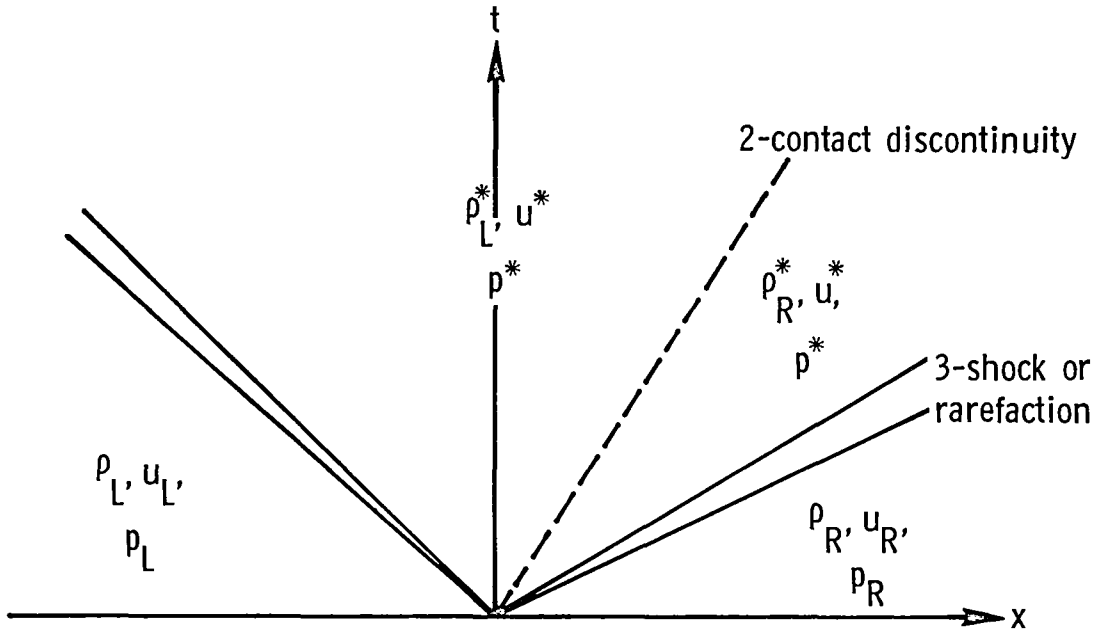


Figure 1: Solution to the Riemann problem.

The initial discontinuity is resolved by a system of waves consisting of a 1-shock or rarefaction, a 2-contact discontinuity, and a 3-shock or rarefaction. If cavitation is excluded the pressure and velocity on either side of the contact discontinuity are equal and are given by  $p^*$  and  $u^*$ .

### 3. THE GLOBAL EXISTENCE THEOREM

A parametric representation of the solution to the Riemann problem and global existence proof are discussed in Smoller [3]. We outline the discussion to relate it to our numerical scheme. Let

$$\beta = \frac{\gamma + 1}{\gamma - 1}$$

and

$$\tau = \frac{\gamma - 1}{2\gamma}.$$

We denote the sound speed by  $c$ , where  $c = (\frac{\gamma p}{\rho})^{1/2}$ . Thus  $c_L$  is the sound speed for the state  $(\rho_L, u_L, p_L)$ . The solution to the Riemann problem is obtained by the following three one-parameter family of curves.

1 - family, for  $x_1 \in \mathbb{R}$ ,

$$\frac{p^*}{p_L} = e^{-x_1}$$

$$\frac{\rho_L^*}{\rho_L} = f_1(x_1) \equiv \begin{cases} e^{-x_1/\gamma}, & x_1 \geq 0 \\ \frac{\beta + e^{x_1}}{1 + \beta e^{x_1}}, & x_1 \leq 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\frac{u^* - u_L}{c_L} = h_1(x_1) \equiv \begin{cases} \frac{2}{\gamma - 1} (1 - e^{-\tau x_1}), & x_1 \geq 0 \\ \frac{2(\tau)^{1/2}}{\gamma - 1} \frac{1 - e^{-x_1}}{(1 + \beta e^{-x_1})^{1/2}}, & x_1 \leq 0 \end{cases}$$

2 - family, for  $x_2 \in \mathbb{R}$

$$\frac{\rho_R^*}{\rho_L^*} = e^{x_2}$$



3 - family, for  $x_3 \in \mathbb{R}$

$$\frac{p_R}{p^*} = e^{x_3}$$

$$\frac{\rho_R}{\rho^*} = f_3(x_3) \equiv \frac{1}{f_1(x_3)}$$

$$\frac{u_R - u^*}{c_R} = h_3(x_3) \equiv \begin{cases} \frac{2}{\gamma - 1} (e^{\tau x_3} - 1), & x_3 \geq 0 \\ \frac{2(\tau)^{1/2}}{\gamma - 1} \frac{(e^{x_3} - 1)}{(1 + \beta e^{x_3})^{1/2}}, & x_3 \leq 0. \end{cases}$$

To obtain a solution of the Riemann problem, we need to solve the above system of equations for the parameters  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ , and  $x_3$ . It should be noted that  $x_1 < 0$  corresponds to a 1-shock and  $x_1 > 0$  to a 1-rarefaction wave. A similar statement holds for the parameter  $x_3$ . Using the above representation the following theorem can be proved.

**Theorem:** Let  $(\rho_L, u_L, p_L)$  and  $(\rho_R, u_R, p_R)$  be any two states (not necessarily close). Then there is a unique solution to the Riemann problem with these initial states if and only if

$$u_R - u_L < \frac{2}{\gamma - 1} (c_L + c_R).$$

If this condition is violated, then a vacuum is present in the solution.

#### 4. THE NUMERICAL METHOD

We first check whether

$$u_R - u_L < \frac{2}{\gamma - 1} (c_L + c_R).$$

If the condition is violated, then cavitation occurs.

To obtain the values  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ , and  $x_3$  explicitly, we define

$$\begin{aligned} A &= \frac{\rho_R}{\rho_L} \\ B &= \frac{p_R}{p_L} \\ C &= \frac{u_R - u_L}{c_L}. \end{aligned}$$

We first solve for  $x_1$ , where  $x_1$  satisfies the equation:

$$g(x_1) \equiv h_1(x_1) + \left(\frac{B}{A}\right)^{1/2} h_1(x_1 + \log B) - C = 0.$$

It should be noted that the function  $g$  is a monotone function. Hence, the equation can be solved efficiently by a numerical routine. We first locate an interval  $[a, b]$  such that  $g(a) < 0$  and  $g(b) > 0$ . With  $a$  and  $b$  as our initial guesses, a few iterations of the regula-falsi method are needed to obtain an accurate value for  $x_1$ .

We then have

$$x_3 = x_1 + \log B.$$

Finally, we obtain  $x_2$  from the equation:

$$f_1(x_1)e^{x_2} f_3(x_3) = A.$$

Having obtained  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ , and  $x_3$  we substitute them into the parametric representation for the solution to the Riemann problem and obtain the values  $u^*$ ,  $p^*$ ,  $\rho_L^*$ , and  $\rho_R^*$ .

## 5. NUMERICAL RESULTS

We found that over a range of  $\gamma$  and on a variety of shock tube problems our Riemann solver converged to the exact solution within about five iterations of the regula-falsi method.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

A numerical method for solving the Riemann problem in gas dynamics has been proposed. The method is based on an existence proof for the solution to the Riemann problem. Its advantages are that it can predict the occurrence of cavitation and it is computationally very efficient.

# APPENDIX

## Computer Program for the Riemann Solver

```

subroutine riemann
common/input/ul,ur,rhol,rhor,pl,pr
common/output/pstar,ustar
common/parm/gamma,beta,tau,a,b,c
c input:ul,ur--velocities to the left and right of interface
c       rhol,rhor--densities
c       pl,pr--pressures
c output:pstar--interface pressure
c       ustar--interface velocity
beta=(gamma+1.)/(gamma-1.)
tau=(gamma-1.)/(2.*gamma)
cl=sqrt(gamma*pl/rhol)
cr=sqrt(gamma*pr/rhor)
c check for cavitation
if((ur-ul).gt.(2.*(cl+cr)/(gamma-1.)))go to 3
a=rhor/rhol
b=pr/pl
c=(ur-ul)/cl
x=0.
c locate interval on which g(x) has a zero
9 if((g(x).gt.0.).or.(g(x+1.).lt.0.))then
    if(g(x).gt.0.)then
        x=x-1.
    else
        x=x+1.
    end if
end if
if((g(x).gt.0.).or.(g(x+1.).lt.0.))go to 9
c do regula-falsi iterations
xmax=x+1.
xmin=x
n=1
8 x=xmax-g(xmax)*(xmax-xmin)/(g(xmax)-g(xmin))
    if(g(x).lt.0.) then
        xmin=x
    else
        xmax=x
    end if
n=n+1
if((abs(xmax-xmin).gt.0.0001).and.(n.le.10)) go to 8
xl=xmax
c calculate ustar,pstar
pstar=exp(-1.*xl)*pl
ustar=ul+cl*hl(xl)
return

```

```
3 print *, 'cavitation occurs'
   return
end

function hl(x)
common/parm/gamma,beta,tau,a,b,c
if(x.gt.0.)then
    hl=(2./(gamma-1.))*(1.-exp(-1.*tau*x))
else
    hl=2.*sqrt(tau)*(1.-exp(-1.*x))/(gamma-1.)
    hl=hl/sqrt(1.+beta*exp(-1.*x))
end if
return
end

function g(x)
external hl
common/parm/gamma,beta,tau,a,b,c
y=x+alog(b)
g=hl(x)+sqrt(b/a)*hl(y)-c
return
end
```

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